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Demands Hearings On Intelligence Changes

STATINTL

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 11 — Senator Stuart Symington (Dem.), Missouri, called yesterday for congressional hearings on the Nixon Administration's reorganization of American intelligence operations.

Symington said in a Senate speech that although many questions about the restructuring were unanswered, one thing was clear: The White House "does not consider either the organization or the operations of the intelligence community to be matters of concern to the Congress."

The changes ordered last Friday by President Richard M. Nixon brought American intelligence and spying operations under closer control of the White House. There were reports, however, that the move had been made, in part, because of what Symington termed "general unhappiness about various specific intelligence estimates."

"Unfortunately, however, it has been impossible for the public, or even concerned members of Congress, to obtain enough information on this subject for informed judgment," he said.

Symington said he had asked for hearings by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee or by its subcommittee on the Central Intelligence Agency. He is a member of each.

The intelligence shake-up last week provided a stronger role for Richard Helms, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and created several new groups to assess and direct intelligence operations.

Among them was the establishment of a "net assessment group" within the National Security Council. There were indications that one of the group's chief concerns would be an evaluation of the balance between the United States and Russia in terms of weapons, economics and politics.

In recent months Government experts have disagreed on the balance of power between the two nations. Department of Defense analysts, including Secretary Melvin R. Laird, have contended that the USSR was gaining strength rapidly. The CIA, on the other hand, had appeared more skeptical about Russian power and capabilities.

Mr. Nixon said that the reorganization was ordered after a full study by the National Security Council and the Office of Management and Budget.

Senator J. William Fulbright (Dem.), Arkansas, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said the reorganization was "a further erosion of congressional control over the intelligence community."

He pointed out that Henry A. Kissinger, placed in charge of the review group, was insulated from congressional scrutiny in his position as the President's national security adviser.

Symington, in his address, said that the changes could be constructive, but, he said, Congress should not be eliminated from the picture.

He said that he would not accept the proposition "that our only current and continuing responsibility is to appropriate whatever number of billions of dollars the executive branch requests to handle this work."

Instead, Congress needs answers to such questions as what were the deficiencies in the U.S. intelligence operation, in what way should it be made more responsive and what is implied by the White House reference to "strengthened leadership" in intelligence?

Symington questioned how Helms's leadership role would be "enhanced," as the White House contended, "by the creation of a new and obviously more powerful supervisory committee chaired by the adviser to the President for national security affairs (Kissinger), on which new board not only sits

the Attorney General but also the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff."

"Has this new White House committee been given authority or/and responsibility which heretofore was the responsibility of the CIA; and which the Congress, under the National Security Act, vested in the agency?" Symington asked.

"How can the integrity of the intelligence product be assured when responsibility for the most critical aspects of intelligence analysis is taken out of the hands of career professionals and vested in a combination of military professionals and the White House staff?"